

Conversation Contents

Fw: From Greenwire -- BRISTOL BAY: Pebble mine tensions remain high afterEPA closes comment period

Butler.Barbara@epamail.epa.gov

From: Butler.Barbara@epamail.epa.gov
Sent: Tue Jul 24 2012 13:25:14 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Jacobs.Scott@epamail.epa.gov,
Venosa.Albert@epamail.epa.gov
Subject: Fw: From Greenwire -- BRISTOL BAY: Pebble mine tensions remain high afterEPA closes comment period

Just FYI.

----- Forwarded by Barbara Butler/CI/USEPA/US on 07/24/2012 03:10 PM -----

From: Barbara Butler/CI/USEPA/US@EPA
To: Barbara Butler/CI/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/24/2012 01:45 PM
Subject: From Greenwire -- BRISTOL BAY: Pebble mine tensions remain high after EPA closes comment period

E-mail this story, sponsored by the National Biodiesel Board

This Greenwire story was sent to you by: butler.barbara@epa.gov

Personal message:

An E&E Publishing Service

BRISTOL BAY: Pebble mine tensions remain high after EPA closes comment period (Tuesday, July 24, 2012)

Manuel Quinones, E&E reporter

Despite pressure from the mining industry, conservative groups and some residents opposed to U.S. EPA intervention, the agency resisted calls for a comment-period extension for its draft review of the impacts of large-scale mining activity in southwestern Alaska.

The comment period officially closed yesterday after more than 185,000 people and groups submitted comments about Pebble LP's proposed gold and copper mine in the Bristol Bay area. And conservation groups say an analysis of the comments shows most are in favor of EPA intervention.

EPA-6363-0000695

"People have spoken loudly and clearly for their jobs, their businesses and their way of life," said Tim Bristol, Alaska director for Trout Unlimited, which opposes the project.

EPA's 338-page draft report said the region is home to all five species of North American Pacific salmon and the world's largest sockeye fishery. It said a large mine would likely hurt the ecosystem there.

Cheri Armstrong, one of the many people who submitted comments to EPA, wrote: "After a divorce, and with very little financial support, I supported my children with fishing earnings. I also paid tuition for my children with earnings from my Bristol Bay fishing."

Alaskans for years have been debating the merits of a mine that could become one of the largest in the world, with the ability to produce 80 billion pounds of copper and more than 100 million ounces of gold.

The discussions have centered on the economic development opportunities of fishing compared with mining and whether the two can coexist. Many residents hope EPA's report can offer some clarity.

"We have waited two long years to read it and feel that it is one more necessary step in the process for complete protection of the Bristol Bay waters, its wildlife, and its people," Chief Thomas Tilden of the Curyung Tribal Council wrote to EPA.

While Pebble has yet to submit documents for permitting or present a final mine plan, environmental groups say they hope EPA will use the review to veto key permits for the project. The mining industry calls such a move unprecedented, illegal and evidence of the Obama administration's heavy hand.

Other than Trout Unlimited, heavyweight environmental groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council and Pew Environment Group have been campaigning against Pebble. For its part, the company spent \$500,000 in lobbying last year and more than \$300,000 so far this year, according to disclosure documents.

The high-profile nature of the debate has attracted global media coverage. Former CBS News anchorman Dan Rather produced a special report on the debate for his show on ASX-TV. And tonight, Public Broadcasting Service stations will begin airing a "Frontline" documentary called "Treasure Hunt: The Battle Over Alaska's Mega Mine."

Industry groups, which hope the media attention adds weight to their cause, have used the comment period to blast EPA's document, the review process and its legality.

"Perhaps most importantly, EPA has failed to answer the fundamental question of why it has chosen to conduct the draft assessment in this manner," the National Mining Association wrote. "With the draft assessment, EPA has essentially created a straw man -- a hypothetical mine, not based on any actual mine plan or application as no such plan has been submitted."

The group added, "Furthermore, while the draft assessment makes assertions about the Bristol Bay watershed, it focuses on only a very small part of two hydrologic units in that watershed and assumes such a small area is representative of the entire 40,000 square mile region."

In a letter last week, a host of conservative groups, including Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform, slammed EPA for its actions in Alaska ([Greenwire](#), July 20). The Western Business Roundtable is adding itself to the list.

"In a variety of contexts, EPA is taking unilateral action to expand its authority in ways that conflict with statutorily-defined state authority," wrote Executive Director Holly Propst. "This regulatory intrusion is one of the major drivers of current congressional scrutiny of EPA and its operations."

Want to read more stories like this?

Click here to start a free trial to E&E -- the best way to track policy and markets.

About Greenwire

Greenwire is written and produced by the staff of E&E Publishing, LLC. The one-stop source for those who need to stay on top of all of today's major energy and environmental action with an average of more than 20 stories a day, Greenwire covers the complete spectrum, from electricity industry restructuring to Clean Air Act litigation to public lands management. Greenwire publishes daily at 1 p.m.

	<p>E&E Publishing, LLC 122 C St., Ste. 722, NW, Wash., D.C. 20001. Phone: 202-628-6500. Fax: 202-737-5299. www.eenews.net</p>
--	---

All content is copyrighted and may not be reproduced or retransmitted without the express consent of E&E Publishing, LLC. [Click here](#) to view our privacy policy.